4-13-2005

Faculty Recital: Kelly Samarzea, contralto

Kelly Samarzea

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music_programs

Part of the Music Commons

Recommended Citation
Samarzea, Kelly, "Faculty Recital: Kelly Samarzea, contralto" (2005). All Concert & Recital Programs. 4688.
https://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music_programs/4688

This Program is brought to you for free and open access by the Concert & Recital Programs at Digital Commons @ IC. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Concert & Recital Programs by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ IC.
FACULTY RECITAL

Kelly Samarzea, contralto
Charis Dimaras, piano

Hockett Family Recital Hall
Wednesday, April 13, 2005
9:00 p.m.
“Songs on Shakespeare and Sirens of Early Musical Theater”

O mistress mine
O mistress mine
Take, O take those lips away
Take, O take those lips away
Come away, death
Come away, death
Fear no more the heat o’ the sun

INTERMISSION

I had myself a true love
Come rain or come shine
from *St. Louis Woman*

Spring can really get you down
from *The Nervous Set*

Turn back, O man
from *Godspell*

Small world
from *Gypsy*

I got the sun in the morning
from *Annie Get Your Gun*
Program Notes

During the planning stages of this performance, I found myself particularly drawn to the style and affinity that many of the early 20th century British composers have for setting Shakespearean texts. This seems obvious, as one would presume composers would excel in the art of settings texts they have grown up with; however, I believe the effectiveness of many of these pieces also has to do with the fact that these composers were fascinated with the Baroque style of transparent voice leading and chromatics which seems to suit Shakespeare nicely (Finzi’s *Come away, death* and Warlock’s *Take, O take those lips away* being prime examples). The songs presented here are only a smattering of the complete existing body of alternate settings for these standard texts. The parameter I decided to remain within, when choosing composers, was to include only songs in English, (Brahms has a setting of *Come away, death* in German for example), and to find songs that best suited the contralto voice, the lowest of the female voice types. Thankfully, the Quilter settings all come in low voice arrangements, which was not always the case with the other composers. Peter Warlock’s *Take, O take those lips away* was specifically arranged to a more contralto-friendly key by theorist/friend, David Pacun. Some of the texts you hear this evening were set as incidental music by Shakespeare himself, to be sung usually as a commentary on the dramatic action, as is the case with *O mistress mine* from his play “Twelfth Night.” Performance note: Finzi’s setting of *Come away, death* uses the term “corpse” as compared to the Quilter setting which uses the original term, “corse,” both having the same definition.

*St. Louis Woman* – based on Arna Bontemps’ novel, “God Sends Sunday,” this African-American cast musical seems a parallel to Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* in musical style and setting. Set in St. Louis in 1898, it tells the story of Della Green, a fickle woman, who is girlfriend to a tough saloon owner, Biglow Brown. She falls for a jockey named Li’l Augie. Brown is killed by a discarded girlfriend, but before he dies puts a curse on Li’l Augie which ends Augie’s winning streak and Della’s affection. This is the first Broadway musical where both black and white writers collaborated on the libretto and score. Lena Horne was originally hired to play Della but quit the show before it opened because she objected to the character as a “painted woman.” The NAACP complained of the low-life milieu of low-life gamblers and kept women. New York run: Martin Beck Theatre, March 30, 1946

*The Nervous Set* – based on Jay Landesman’s autobiographical novel of the same title, this jazz musical focuses on the “Beats” (a generation of Bohemian writers in post-World War II America), particularly the relationships between Landesman, his wife, Fran,
and several other Beat literary icons, including Jack Kerovac and Allen Ginsberg. *Spring can really get you down* was dropped from the original 1955 production of the show prior to its Broadway debut in 1959, but went on to gain popularity as a jazz standard. New York run: Henry Miller’s Theatre, May 12, 1959 with only 23 performances.

*Godspell* – based on the Gospel according to Matthew, the original work interestingly enough did not include music and was presented as a workshop piece at Cafe La Mama in NYC. With an original run of 2,124 off-Broadway performances, it is currently the fourth longest running off-Broadway musical. The show’s official Broadway opening took place in 1976 with 527 performances. At one time there were seven road companies touring the work throughout the United States. This whimsical musical retells the last seven days of Christ, the original production portrayed Jesus in clown make-up and a superman “S” t-shirt, his disciples costumed as flower children. In this selection, Mary Magdalene morally instructs the audience to “forswear thy foolish ways” in a song set to music reminiscent of burlesque music in the early part of the 20th century. The score suggests that the ad libs be based on actual audience members, for instance, “Hiya, Curly” directed to a bald man. New York run: Cherry Lane Theatre, May 17, 1971.

*Gypsy* – based on the autobiography of famous American stripper, Gypsy Rose Lee, *Gypsy* is one of the crowning moments of the musical theater genre. It is the story of Gypsy’s mother, Rose, a stage-mom manager who ruthlessly pushes her two daughters onto the vaudeville stage. The youngest daughter, June runs off to marry a dancer at the age of 13. Rose ultimately has a nervous breakdown, because she is no longer needed by her eldest daughter, Louise (Gypsy), who launches a career in Burlesque. *Small world* is a sentimental moment from Act 1 that Rose sings to love interest, Herbie, whom she hopes will make a good partner in helping her further June’s career and act as a father figure to her daughters. New York run: Broadway Theatre, May 21, 1959.

*Annie Get Your Gun* – another musical biography, based on the life of sharp-shooter, Annie Oakley, an illiterate hillbilly who lived in the mid-1880’s. The third longest running musical of the 1940’s, it was the biggest Broadway hit for Irving Berlin, and Ethel Merman, whom Berlin wrote the part for. In the show, Annie who is convinced to join Colonel Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, outshines her ace shooting love interest, Frank Butler, causing trouble in the romance. New York run: Imperial Theatre, May 16, 1946.

* Due to the nature of this program, bibliographical information is not included, but is certainly available on demand to anyone interested.